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★ NOV 13 1936 ★
U. S. Department of Agriculture

HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Friday, November 20, 1936

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "APPLES, RED OR YELLOW." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, United States Department of Agriculture.

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Apples, like maidens, travel largely on their looks. But the most beautiful color in apples, as in maidens, has to come from within. Scientists support this viewpoint. They tell us that the chemical changes in apples which bring out good color are also those which are required to bring the fruit to maturity and to develop flavor, aroma, and good eating quality. A red variety, then, in order to be good, should be good and red. And yellow ones should be really yellow, to be "glowing with apple health."

"Buyers have a decided preference for well-colored apples, because good color is a practical and easy way to tell that the fruit is ripe," says this week's Market Basket from the Bureau of Home Economics of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. "The grower knows, too, that if other factors are satisfactory the finest-looking apples will rate the best U. S. grades and bring the best prices. He also packs the most attractive fruit because well-colored apples are not nearly so subject to injury by apple scald as are apples in which color is imperfectly developed."

Perhaps you've been hearing rumors of a short apple crop. It's true that the crop is only 63 per cent of last year's, in fact the lightest since 1921. But there are still plenty of apples, according to the market specialists. In the first place, almost 40 million bushels of the total crop have been grown on farms for home use, or on single apple trees in towns and even in cities. In the second place, in years of great apple abundance, some of the crop never reaches the market. In the past there have been seasons when it did not pay to hire labor to pick apples or ship them, even to the cider mill. When we have a year of reported scarcity it is likely that the best apples will be handled with more care so that they will reach the market in good condition.

The way apples are stored is important also. Scientists have found that apples go right on ripening after they are picked. How fast they ripen depends partly on the variety of the apple and the place where it grew, and partly on the temperature of the storage room. Most commercial varieties store well if they are held between 32 and 40 degrees Fahrenheit -- just a little above freezing. Some of them, like Winesaps, keep on getting better and better and reach prime eating quality about the end of February. Western and New York apples ripen somewhat more slowly than the same varieties grown in Virginia.

The main thing in apple buying is to choose well-colored apples with their use in mind, though naturally we have to pick from the varieties in our local market. If the dealer handles U. S. graded apples, the grades will be on the boxes or barrels. You can find them for yourself if he doesn't mention the fact.

Some kinds of apples are best for pie or sauce, others to put in the school lunches or the fruit bowl on the sideboard. A juicy, tart, Rhode Island Greening or a Rome Beauty makes better dumplings than the mild Delicious, - which is all its name implies for eating out of hand. Incidentally, either because of its name, its flavor, or its looks, the Delicious apple has become a best seller.

There are 35 or 40 well known apple varieties, but about 10 or 15 of them account for 85 per cent of the average crop. The most important apple growing sections are New York and the Potomac-Cumberland-Shenandoah Valley area in the East, and Washington and Oregon in the Northwest. A quantity of apples also comes from New England and the North Central States, and California, Idaho, and Colorado ship thousands of bushels each year to eastern markets.

Just to give a few of the variety names prominent in three main apple growing regions. For general purpose apples there are: Wealthy, an early apple in the East, but gathered in the fall in Michigan and the upper Mississippi region; Jonathan, common to all middle latitude States as well as in the Northwest; Northern Spy, another northern and eastern favorite; Stayman Winesap, Baldwin, and McIntosh.

Those who know apples recommend for eating uncooked: Delicious, Esopus Spitzenberg, Grimes Golden, Yellow Newtown, and those in the general purpose group. Some apples bake well because of their size and firm flesh, others cook up well for pie or sauce. Generally speaking, the York Imperial, Baldwin, Rome Beauty, and both the Winesaps can be depended on for cooking in all the different ways apples can be cooked. For jelly, the best varieties in the New York area are Rhode Island Greenings, Esopus Spitzenberg, Tompkins King, Northern Spy, and Fall Pippin. Oregon recommends Maiden Blush, Scott, Twenty Ounce, Jonathan, Rome Beauty, Northern Spy, and several others.

One last word: Why limit the apple desserts to baked apples, pie, and sauce? Why not have dumplings, turnovers, cobblers, brown betty, or apple upside-down cake? Apple tapioca and Dutch apple cake are other favorites. Then there are the dishes in which apples are combined with vegetables. Scaloped with sweet potatoes or red cabbage, for instance. Or fried with carrots or onions. Cook apples with as little water as possible, and not too long. And spice apples sparingly, or you may cover up the delicate flavor of the apple itself. And add a few grains of salt to bring out the apple's own sweetness.

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